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775 about shouting that they were afraid of Maravin's *urar* which was chasing them. They refused to sleep in the hut that night, and crowded in with the boys in the other *tobar*. Next day they set energetically about finishing their own, the building of which had been in progress, in a very desultory fashion, for some time.

Hysterical dissociation

158 775 828 The *urar* are, in the native mind, held responsible for a mode of behaviour which is classified by psychologists as a form of dissociation. The affected individual rushes about the place, often brandishing a knife or an axe, shouting quite unintelligibly, and threatening any person who crosses his line of vision. Although no one was actually hurt in the cases which came under my personal observation, the natives told me that physical injury is occasionally inflicted by persons in this condition, and that people have even been killed by them. Generally, however, the damage is confined to property. A man in this state is said to be *iburar* (struck by the spirits).

158 Five cases occurred in the village of Kurtatchi (with a population of about 130) during the nine months of my stay. Three of them followed each other rapidly, all three occurring within ten days; the fourth and fifth, with two months between them, took place after a lapse of some months. Although an individual explanation was given for two out of the three occurring in sequence, it may be that suggestibility played its part so that the behaviour of one was not without its effect on the others, but this is mere surmise. All the affected persons were men, one a *tsunaun*, the others commoners. Unfortunately, I can find nothing in my notes to indicate whether women are also liable to these attacks. As the condition is of some psychological interest, it may be worth while to describe these episodes in some detail. Two occurred at night, three in the day-time.

158 775 828 My first acquaintance with this phenomenon was made on one occasion when I had strolled over casually to visit a neighbour, and found a man named Sinke, who lived in another part of the village, lying on the ground behind the hut, naked, talking and gesticulating excitedly. Several people were sitting round, looking at him but taking no action. They called out to him that I was coming, but instead of covering himself with his loin-cloth as he would have done in the ordinary way, he swore volubly, and remained as

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he was. One of the other men excused his behaviour to me, saying that an *urar* had got him. When he saw me he called out to me that an *urar* was inside him. The attack appeared to be passing off, for he added, in a more rational tone, that to-morrow he would tell me what the *urar* had done to him, at the same time pulling his loin-cloth over his body. Next day he came to me looking very ill, and asked for medicine, saying he had a headache. I gave him some aspirin and questioned him about the occurrence of the day before, but he said he could remember nothing about it. My servant said that was what always happened to people who were seized by *urar*, and that the headache was the usual sequel.

The second incident happened a few days later. Late one evening the village was in a state of great commotion, with much shouting and scurrying about and barking of dogs. Several men rushed up on to my verandah and shut themselves in the room, adjacent to my own part of the house, occupied by my servant. They said Pinari (the *tsunaun*) was *iburar* and was chasing them all. Shortly afterwards he came tearing past the fence, howling in a weird fashion, and threw something, which fell with a crash. Presently a boy came and said that Pinari had been found lying across his brother's grave in the old graveyard, and taken home, and that they thought he would be all right.

When I asked after Pinari next morning his wife said he was very ill. In the afternoon she came to beg some biscuits for him, 'because his mouth could not eat taro'. I visited him on the afternoon of the following day. He seemed pleased to see me but talked quite incoherently, chiefly about 'poisoning'. I could make nothing of any of it. Next day he seemed much better, and gave me an account of what had happened. He said he had been cleaning the road near the old graveyard, and had omitted the usual ceremony of blowing lime over the road to send away the *urar*, because the priest had forbidden it. The *urar* were angry with him and made him mad. He went to church, and on his way back he saw an *urar*. It was one of his brothers. It was standing beside the banana palm that grows near his house. Then he went mad and fought every one. Then he went to the graveyard and saw his brothers and his mother, and one brother seized him by the back of the neck and another by the legs. They were angry because he had not blown lime for them or given them food. His mother cried over him, so they let him go and he ran and ran and ran and came to Tarongen (this is a hamlet

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some five miles away, he had not had time to go there in reality before he was caught), and then he came back and took the road to the old village (in which the brothers had died) and one of the *urar* told him to come along with them. Then his son came and took his arm and told him he must not run after people, and brought him back to his own house, and he went to sleep. Since then his back and his legs had been hurting him. He looked terribly thin and worn, like a person recovering after a long illness.

The third case, which followed seven days after the one just described, was that of Tchiriv, a young man aged about twenty-five. He was lying on the front verandah of one of the huts, during a dance, when he suddenly jumped up and ran about shouting and throwing in all directions the pile of logs which were kept under the verandah for use as firewood. The people all ran away and shut themselves into their houses. He seized hold of a big *mabu* (musical instrument made of a hollowed log with a mouthpiece of coco-nut, an article of value) belonging to a neighbour, and smashed it all to pieces. Presently four of the younger men rushed up to him together, and seized him, and brought him, kicking and struggling, to a bench outside one of the huts, where they held him down, screaming, while another man blew powdered lime over him.[1] Presently he quietened down and was put to bed in his hut. The next day he remained indoors, and they said he was sick. Matarē said he didn't know that he had broken Togen's *mabu*; when they told him he would be very sorry and would pay for it. Matarē told me that Tchiriv said he had been to the graveyard to get some coco-nuts from the trees there, and because the priest had forbidden it, he did not make a fire and burn some taro for the *urar*, so that they should not be angry with him for taking coco-nuts from their ground. So the *urar* were angry with him and made him mad. I did not see him at all that day until the evening, when he came out of the hut, which was very near to my house, and walked past my fence with his eyes turned away. I took no notice of him at that time, but next day when I found him standing by the fence, looking sheepish, I made a friendly remark to him. He seemed startled, but soon after came up on to my verandah and

[1] There is also a plant, called *pindī*, the leaves of which, if chewed with the betel-mixture and spat on to the head of the affected person, will cause the *urar* to leave him.

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seemed to be himself again, but he did not want to talk about his experience. The villagers said he had these attacks more often than other people.

It is perhaps relevant to mention here that some weeks later the same man, when talking to me about love magic, told me that he had an *urar* that belonged to him particularly. His name was Butchiar, and he showed him the magic in a dream. He said that when he wanted to know anything, such as what 'medicine' to use in a given case, he asked Butchiar, who told him. Tchiriv had no particular reputation as a magician among the villagers, and no one seemed to take either him or Butchiar very seriously, but once when they began calling a young man whom I knew as Kakari by the name of Bori, I asked the reason for the change, and Kakari said that Tchiriv had given him the new name, saying that Butchiar had told him to do so.

The fourth case, which took place some three months later, was that of Minka, a middle-aged man, who rushed round the village throwing logs about. He said afterwards that Maravin's *urar*[1] made him mad, because it was angry about Maravin's grandson, and told Minka that the boy, Kiram, was not getting enough to eat. While he was alive he always looked after him. A young man who heard Minka telling me this said that there were several houses where the boy was given food, and that the *urar* had lied!

The fifth case, Togen, also a middle-aged man, occurred two months after the fourth. It so happened that I was away from the village all day, so I did not see the man during the attack, which was reported to have been a mild one. When I questioned him later, he could give me no information about it whatever.

While talking over with me the episode in which Pinari had figured, my servant said that if he wished he could call the spirit (*amat*) of one of the important men belonging to his family to come and stop inside him, then if he were angry with a man he could send the spirit to kill that man. As long as he was kind to the spirit and gave it food it would not make him mad. Every time he ate he would have to put some food up in the rafters of the house in a special place. If he did not the spirit would be angry and make him mad and he would go about chasing people. He was very serious throughout the talk and ended by saying: 'This is really true about the Kanakas (the name used by the natives for themselves when

[1] Maravin is the old man who had died (on May 10, see pp. 484, 515.)

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talking to white people, and by the white people for them) but the white men say it is nonsense.'

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I was also told about a man named Tatsinan, living at the village of Tendu, who has a little house where he sleeps with the *urar* and feeds them and gives them areca-nut. No one but himself may go into it. The *urar* come to him there and talk with him.

Discussion

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The occurrence among Papuans and Melanesians of states of hysterical dissociation has been discussed by Seligman (1929, p. 199 and Huxley Lecture, 1932, p. 227, &c.). In the instances quoted by him, while 'there is wild excitement and threats of assault on all and sundry', no serious injury was done, and for this among other reasons he differentiates these outbreaks from the far more serious condition known among the Malays as *amok*. The only evidence I can supply on this aspect of the question is the statement of the natives that men were sometimes injured or killed by persons who were *ibarar*. It is possible, of course, that such injuries may have been received, as in a case quoted by Seligman, 'in the struggle to restrain the patient'. This seems to be the same condition as that described in the papers above referred to, and in a more severe form by Fortune (1932, pp. 54–5) who relates it to the Malay *amok*. In this I think he may be mistaken, for I doubt whether these individuals can strictly be described as 'out to kill' in the sense that this phrase could be applied to the *amok*-running Malay.

A similar condition is described by Ivens (1927, pp. 191 ff.) among the Melanesians of the SE. Solomons. But I never heard of people in this state, in the villages known to me, being employed as professionals 'to ascertain the cause of sickness', or for any other reason. In my experience they were regarded by their fellow villagers as mad, and no notice whatever was taken of anything they said—which was generally unintelligible.

I did not meet with any instance of compulsory imitative actions such as are described by Clifford in Malays afflicted with *lâtah* (*Studies in Brown Humanity*, 1898, pp. 186–201) and in the aborigines of Siberia by Czaplicka (*Aboriginal Siberia*, 1914, chap. xv).

Discussing the cause of these and similar outbreaks, Seligman (1929, p. 198) thinks it probable that some of them are due to malaria. It will be noted that in three of the cases observed by me

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the victims were 'off colour' for a day or two afterwards, and it is certain that these natives are frequent sufferers from malaria. It seems to me not unlikely, also, that in some of these cases it may be true, as Seligman suggests elsewhere (1932, p. 221) 'that a desire—perhaps not entirely conscious—to draw the attention of the community enters into the causation'. This may perhaps be applicable, e.g. to the behaviour of Sinke, which had in it an element of exhibitionism which was absent in the others. But while not excluding either of these possibilities, I incline to think that the reasons given by the natives themselves do, in fact, supply the clue, and that the attacks were actually caused by auto-suggestion, due to the knowledge that something had been done to offend the *urar*, or to what we might term, in unpsychological language, 'a guilty conscience'. It is noteworthy that two cases out of the three for which explanations were furnished arose out of a conflict between the old religion and the new ideas received from the mission, which further corroborates the conclusions reached by Seligman in the papers here referred to.

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following incident, which was told by a man who claimed to be related to the *urar* Mategin:

There is a place in the river where the water swirls round, just as if it were boiling, but it is not hot. There are a lot of fish in it. They are *urar* fish. There is one fish which is black, with red and white marks round its mouth, and hair like a man's, the fish is an *urar*. When he is an *urar* his name is Mategin, he walks about at night, then he looks just like a big tree. He goes to Soraken, to Torrikorri, and to Saposa (all these places are on the other side of the bay). The water belongs to him. A man named Takoman, who used to work for white men in the time of the Germans (i.e. before the war, when this island was a German dependency, and its white population was largely German), lit some dynamite[1] and threw it into the middle of the water among the fish. The dynamite flared up. The fish did not die, not one single fish was killed. Takoman went to look for the fish. All the *urar* were angry with him: 'Why do you try to kill us with dynamite?' Then he became *iburar* all the time. He did bad things, he thought about nothing but women. (Here follow details which indicate that the man was a sexual maniac.) His relatives could have cured him if they had taken some of the water from the pool belonging to the *urar* and poured it over his head and made a feast. But they were so angry with him because he shot dynamite in a river which is taboo, that they would not make the medicine, so he remained *iburar*, and got worse and worse till he died.

I give below another illustration of the transformation of *urar* as typical of this kind of story, of which there are a number in my collection. They are all told as actual happenings, distinct from those that are recognized to be merely tales.

There was a man who went fishing at dead of night in the open sea. Just before dawn he saw an *urar* come up, he walked above the water (his feet about a foot from the surface, distance shown by a gesture). He pursued the man in the canoe, the man paddled away. The *urar* turned into a shark, he came after the canoe. The canoe stopped. The shark climbed up on to the outrigger. The man cursed it. The shark turned into an *urar* again, and moved about above the water. Then he turned into a *kitatŝ* (a large round fish, possibly a groper). He reared up, he wanted to throw himself down on the top of the canoe so as to upset it. The man paddled hard, he got away and went farther out to sea. The *kitatŝ* turned again into a shark. Then dawn broke, the shark became an *urar* again and disappeared. The man went ashore at his own village. He told all the people. They all said: 'Oh rubbish, you are fooling, where

[1] Dynamite is used by planters to stun fish; the natives are forbidden to use it except under supervision, but they get hold of it when they can.

red oxide paint and struggle to escape the retaining holds of their mothers. The *muri-na-lium* wildly brandish spears and axes to frighten the women.

All *tseezen* are then paraded in a circle as a farewell to their mothers and female relatives. The women fling themselves down upon the ground, crying and moaning and calling on their sons to remain with them rather than brave the dangers of Ndook. They work themselves into a paroxysm of fear and reach a stage bordering hysteria. (I have noted occasions when several women in throwing themselves upon the ground have become divested of their loin-cloths and, quite oblivious of the fact, have rolled about naked. At the present time a Pororan woman would ordinarily never do this. As the *tseezen* march around accompanied by the *muri-na-lium* the latter keep the women at a distance with the aid of their weapons. After half-an-hour or so the *tseezen* are led away to the ceremonial ground, followed as far as the boundary of the village by a wailing hysterical crowd of female relatives. When they arrive at the ground they are ranged in a line, together with their guards, who hold each one by the arm to prevent his escape.

From every direction there then arises the cry of the *liahan* and the squawking piercing notes of the *rago*. From the direction whence the *bahuan* and the *malai* will come then rise the shouts of the *muri-na-lium* and the *putz-putzi* as they slowly advance through the bush. As they emerge, covered in bush leaves or thin strips of coconut fronds (see Plate II, B), and carrying the images a small number of the *muri-na-lium* rush toward them and engage in a mock fight, their purpose being to make a pretence of defending the *tseezen* from the ravages of Ndook. Sometimes an attacker will rough-handle a *tseezen* for a few moments, but seldom is any bodily harm done in these conflicts. The *bahuan* and the *malai* are then placed in the centre of the clearing and are surrounded by the *putz-putzi*. Here they remain for a short space of time and are then taken away to the bush with much shouting, accompanied by the roarings of the *liahan* and cries of the *rago*. The *muri-na-lium* then explain to the newly-initiated youths the absolute necessity for strict secrecy to be maintained towards all *tseezen* and women in respect of what they have seen. The penalty following any breach is death.